



NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON “10 WATERS TO WATCH”

On April 30th, on the banks of the Potomac River, the National Fish Habitat Board, a group of the nation’s leading authorities on aquatic conservation, unveiled its list of “10 Waters to Watch.” The waters featured on this list demonstrate the results of conservation efforts under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, a bold new initiative to reverse persistent declines in our nation’s aquatic habitat.

“Thanks to an approach that teams federal, state and local partners, these 10 waters soon will begin to heal,” said John Cooper, Chair of the National Fish Habitat Board. “These and other projects across the country mark the beginning of an unprecedented effort to prevent the further decline of aquatic habitat across the country.”

The waters highlighted on the list range from Maine to Alaska and from Idaho to Mississippi. Projects on these waters are bringing together community groups, Native American tribes, and state and federal agencies to plant stream-side vegetation, remove structures blocking fish from accessing habitat and protect rivers from the effects of agriculture and livestock.

The ‘10 Waters to Watch’ are the following:

1. **Moose Creek, Alaska:** The Moose Creek project will include 1,500 feet of creek restoration and 9 miles of improved fish passage for salmon and many other important species. Contact Jessica Dryden for more information at 907/745-0737.
2. **Bear Wallow Creek, Arizona:** This project will remove fish barriers and restore 1.8 miles instream habitat for Apache trout and many other important species. For more information, please contact Jeremy Voletz at 928/338-4288.
3. **Badger Creek, Idaho:** This project will restore 6.5 miles of fish access for bull trout and many other important species. For more information, please contact Kim Goodman at 208/552-0891.
4. **Upper Iowa River, Iowa:** This project will restore diverse riparian and instream habitats in South Pine and West Branch French creeks. This will aid the Eastern brook trout and many other important species. For more information, please

contact Louise Mauldin at 608/783-8407.

5. **South Bog Stream, Maine:** This project will restore 2.1 miles of instream habitat, completing restoration of the entire 6.3 miles of South Bog Stream. This restoration aids the Eastern brook trout, as well as many other important species. For more information, please contact Maureen Gallagher 276/376-4597.
6. **Pascagoula River, Mississippi:** Through restoration of 1 acre of tidal marsh habitat in the Bennett Bayou Marsh, which had been impacted by Hurricane Katrina and urban development, this project will benefit multiple Gulf species, including red drum, brown and white shrimp, Gulf sturgeon, speckled trout and Atlantic croaker, among others. For more information, please contact Judy Steckler at 228/436-9191.
7. **Upper Duck River, Tennessee:** This joint project will restore more than 3 miles of riparian habitat along Big Rock Creek within the Duck River Basin for a variety of native fish and mussel species. For more information contact Leslie Colley 931/840-8881
8. **Smith Creek, Virginia:** This project will focus on restoring the creek's headwaters and includes restoration of 8 miles of new fish access, 3.5 miles of riparian habitat, 1.7 miles of instream habitat and 65 acres upland habitat for the Eastern brook trout and many other important species. For more information, please contact Maureen Gallagher at 276/376-4597.
9. **Upper Browns River, Vermont:** This project will focus on riparian restoration, including 2 miles of stream frontage for the Eastern brook trout and other species. For more information, please contact Chris Smith at 802/872-0629.
10. **LaBarge Creek, Wyoming:** The many partners working on the LaBarge Creek project are removing non-native species and helping to protect 58 miles of instream habitat for the recovery of native Colorado cutthroat trout populations. For more information, please contact Dirk Miller at 307/777-4559.

These 10 waters are bringing together community groups, non-profit organizations, local watershed groups, Native American tribes and state and federal agencies to plant stream-side vegetation, remove structures blocking fish from accessing habitat and protect rivers from the effects of agriculture and livestock. The idea is to provide clean water and robust, healthy habitats for the many fish and wildlife species and people who call these areas home.

The National Fish Habitat Action Plan currently supports 40 local, grassroots-driven projects, like those on the Waters to Watch list, as well as national efforts to identify the root causes of aquatic habitat declines, identify and implement corrective actions, and measure and communicate its progress. To date, the hundreds of partners signed on in support of the Action Plan to include a range of organizations interested in the health of

the nation's fisheries, including fishing clubs, international conservation organizations, federal agencies, angling industries and academia.

Projects in the 10 Waters to Watch are being coordinated through five "National Fish Habitat Partnerships" and organized as regional-scale efforts to implement the Action Plan. These regional Partnerships are currently "pilots" that include the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership, Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, the Western Native Trout Initiative, the Midwest Driftless Area Restoration Effort, and the Matanuska-Susitna Basin Salmon Conservation Partnership. The National Fish Habitat Action Plan calls for the creation of twelve or more Fish Habitat Partnerships by 2010.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife is a proud participant and is helping to put the plan into action.

For more information about, and a complete look at the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, visit www.fishhabitat.org.